

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON

October 4, 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Presidential Interest in SA-2 Missile System and Contingency Planning for Cuba

1. In your memorandum of 21 September 1962, you noted an apparent lack of unanimity between General LeMay and Admiral Anderson with respect to aircraft losses that might occur in attacking an SA-2 site. You further requested assurance as to the currency of contingency planning for Cuba.

2. I have discussed with General LeMay and Admiral Anderson their estimate of aircraft losses in attacking SA-2 missile sites. Admiral Anderson agrees with General LeMay's point that no losses would be suffered from the SA-2 missile since the attacking aircraft would fly below the effective minimum altitude of the SA-2. General LeMay shares Admiral Anderson's estimate that attacking aircraft might suffer some loss to antiaircraft artillery defenses of the SA-2 site.

3. If antiaircraft artillery is employed in direct support of the missile site, losses may be expected. World War II and Korean experience, updated to reflect current antiaircraft artillery capabilities against modern aircraft, indicates that low level attack forces would incur some combat losses from antiaircraft artillery fire; however, numbers cannot be predicted accurately. There are currently no known antiaircraft artillery defenses of SA-2 sites in Cuba. Attack plans can be amended to take the antiaircraft weapons under fire during the attack if reconnaissance shows such defenses and if analysis shows such fire suppression necessary. Korean experience proved that such fire suppression was unnecessary when surprise could be achieved.

4. In my opinion and that of the Joint Chiefs, it is not necessary to build a model of an SA-2 site for training purposes. However, the aircraft revetment of the type found at Santa Clara and Camaguey is a more difficult target than the SA-2 site. Therefore, the Air Force

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has found it desirable to reproduce that type aircraft revetment to aid in the selection of weapons, method of delivery and to assist in training crews. The target was completed at Nellis AFB, Nevada, on 30 September 1962, at an approximate cost of \$28,000. Initial tests indicate that the GAM 83, 20 mm cannon, and napalm is the most effective weapons mix against aircraft in such revetments.

5. I have taken steps to insure that our contingency plans for Cuba are kept up to date.

6. The Navy plans to attack SA-2 targets at low level using 4 divisions of A-4D's (4 aircraft per division) armed with 250#, 500#, and 2000# low drag bombs and napalm. All crews are proficient in the delivery techniques planned. Similarly, the Air Force plans primary use of napalm and 20 mm cannon delivered at low level, and crews are proficient. Both have made detailed target studies; target folders are in the hands of crews; and crews are familiar with their assigned targets. As new missile sites are located, they are picked up in the target and attack plans within a few hours of receipt of photographs.

Robert S. McNamara